

Australian Men's Shed Association Newsletter

*The official publication of the
"Australian Men's Shed Association"*



There is no relationship between the community-based "Australian Men's Sheds Association (AMSA), representing independent Community Men's Sheds, and the Company "Menshed Australia Ltd".

AMSA moves forward

Over the last few weeks there have been significant developments regarding the Australian Men's Sheds Association (AMSA).

At the Manly Conference the members agreed that the existing Work Group should act as an interim committee, with tasks of setting up a suitable structure, organising elections and handing over a functioning Association to the newly elected committee. This proved difficult because it was relying on their spare time and the members of the Work Group are all heavily involved in other activities. In addition AMSA didn't have any money to enable people to get together to discuss and carry out this plan. The administration of records, database, website and general queries has now become onerous on voluntary help.

It is very clear that the Association will not become what we all want it to be unless it can be properly set up and operated professionally by an experienced person with funding to cover time, administration and travel costs.

An opportunity to do this has now come up.

Over the last four years Centacare in Newcastle have used funds from Federal Government grants to set up Men's Sheds in their area. They employed David Helmers to set up the "Shed @ Windale". This was very successful and David's brief was then extended to setting up or assisting other Sheds in the area. This subsequently developed into the Hunter Valley "Cluster" group.

Centacare has now offered to use a significant proportion of their current funding to cover the expenses for David to help in properly establishing AMSA. This offer was unanimously accepted by the Work Group Committee.

David's tasks will be to set up effective administration, draw up business plans and to source further funding. He will liaise with the Committee to define what sort of Association structure is required, how we elect representatives, organize elections and then hand over a functioning organization to the newly elected representatives. Some developments are already well in hand (Page 2)

This is a significant step in the development of AMSA and should result in the Association doing the work that we have wanted it to do all along.

Ted Donnelly

2009 National Men's Shed Conference

27th & 28th August 2009.

Brighton Community Centre, Hobart,

Pete's Community Workshed and Jordan River Service Inc. are auspicing this event and the organizing committee are currently hard at work on the admin and programme planning, sponsorship and accommodation packages.

All ideas from "Shedders for Conference Topics & Presentations are welcome.

Contact John Waters
bridgewatershed@bigpond.com

Phone AMSA on 1300 550 009

The lack of a dedicated phone contact has been a problem but now you can contact the Australian Men's Shed Association directly on our new number 1300 550 009 for all Shed enquiries. (Local call costs on landlines)

This new contact point will provide support to all Sheds, forward general enquiries from potential members and supporters to the nearest shed in their area as well as providing Start up assistance to communities wishing to create a Shed.

Some members have agreed to act as regional contacts for enquiries that require local knowledge and their details are given on Page 6

To contact us for all Association business:- Phone **1300 550 009** or Email amsa@tpg.com.au
Previous Newsletters are available on the AMSA website - www.mensshed.org

Planning AMSA's Future

A lot has been happening over the past 3 months, but there is still along way to go until AMSA is fully operational.

The establishment of the 1300 centralised telephone number quickly led to a large number of enquiries from communities wishing to establish sheds, contacts from sheds that have been in existence for some time through to organisations wishing to donate tools and materials as well as enquiries as to the whereabouts of the nearest Shed. These calls certainly showed the necessity for an Association of all the Men's Sheds in Australia.

During this time a major task has been the drafting of a constitution for the Association. This has been helped by great support from legal advisors from Centacare and Uniting Care. We have also been advised that AMSA, being a national body, should be a Not for Profit Company Limited by Guarantee.

The draft constitution will soon be ready for circulation to members for comment.

Another major task is in defining the structure of AMSA in relation to the constitution. The structure given below is being proposed for discussion.

| AMSA Board of Management | |
|--|--|
| <p><u>Executive Members</u></p> <p>Chairperson & Vice Chair Secretary Treasurer State Representatives Executive Officer</p> | <p><u>Non Executive Members</u></p> <p>Associates Supporting Agencies Specialist Advisors</p> |

It is proposed that each State chooses representatives to the AMSA Board (or Management Committee) by whatever system they find best for their members. It has still to be decided whether the numbers are the same (eg 2 per State) or in proportion to the number of Sheds in that State.

The Board, comprises Executive members, who have been elected by the separate States and the Rules of an Association specify positions of Chairperson, Vice Chair, Secretary & Treasurer as well as the minimum number of committee members. The Office bearers can be elected by all the members of the Association or by the elected representatives. The optimum procedure for AMSA has still to be resolved.

The position of Executive Officer of AMSA is constitutionally identified as one of appointment by the Management committee. This is to enable AMSA to be in a position in the future to employ appropriately skilled people to fulfil such as position if required.

In addition it is proposed that Non Executive members be appointed by the elected representatives to assist them. The Non Executive members would be chosen because of their specialist experience or contacts to useful outside organizations. They would include Associates, who are experienced in Men's Sheds or similar organizations, and also representatives of Supporting Agencies who are auspicing many Sheds. Other Specialist Advisors can be appointed as required.

From the above it can be seen that a number of points need to be discussed and agreed. A meeting of the current committee is planned in Canberra during November to clarify these points which will then be presented to Members.

Please forward your views and suggestions to AMSA. (amsa@tpg.com.au)

Victorian Mens Shed Association Presidents Report

After humble beginnings with 30 – 40 people in attendance, the first Statewide Men's Shed meeting was held on Friday 30th March 2007. With enthusiasm sparked at the Lakes Entrance Conference, participants were keen to explore the possibility of developing a network. Within all the details of the meeting; there was a sense that our combined gathering could go beyond what we presently envisaged. It did!...and now with our 1st AGM we can reflect on our journey and welcome old and new comers to celebrate and acknowledge our achievements.

At the second meeting in Ballarat a motion was put forward to become an incorporated association. After the next network meeting in August 07, the Victorian Men's Shed movement was incorporated on the 24th September 2007. with the help of a reference group made up of 6- 8 Sheddors from all parts of Victoria.

In our first year we developed a brochure in a way that has become the VMSA style of communication, via email and then phone when you really have too much to say. Designing and wording the brochure gave us the opportunity to combine our skills and articulate who we are and how we want to present to the wider community.

When Cathy Donovan, Manager of Neighbourhood Houses and Men's Sheds from the Department of Planning and Community Development asked to speak at our August 2007 meeting regarding funding, we were thrilled for her to attend and speak. At the same meeting Rick Hayes presented his report, Men's Sheds: Exploring The Evidence for Best Practice; we knew then our network was relevant and worthwhile for Men's Sheds as well as other bodies.

While all this was taking place Evan Sutton was gathering a database of Men's Sheds and their activities. Information that details the supporting organisation and contacts are invaluable as we formalise our membership and join with the Australian Men's Shed Association database in the future.

As President, and with others on the Committee, I have had contact with many men and women throughout Victoria who are in the throes of starting a shed or are well on their way. Usually they find us through word of mouth, newspaper articles e.g. (Donald Men's Shed, The Age August 25th 2007), from other Men's Sheds or the Internet. Shed details have been added to the database and we have sent them information gathered from Network meetings such as Steve Kolotylo's, WorkSafe presentation and papers from Rick Hayes and Barry Golding. Most importantly they have been added to the email list held by Gary Green at the Orbost outpost. Gary's emails are a pivotal point of contact for members who want information, news, encouragement, access to other members and the odd admonishment (late RSVP to meetings).

We are continuing to strengthen our links with the emerging AMSA. As representative of the Committee, our secretary Lyn Kinder spoke at the 2nd Community Based Men's Shed conference in Sydney, September 2007, to those involved with the Australian Men's Shed Association about the activities and journey of the VMSA. Our relationship with AMSA will only continue to grow and strengthen from here on in. The AMSA Committee plan to meet in Canberra in November along with David Helmers who is now employed by AMSA. At this meeting they will continue to develop their constitution and policies. Stay tuned for more news as it develops.

It was a thrill for us to invite and welcome Professor David de Kretser A.C. Governor of Victoria to be our patron early in January this year. His patronage has raised our profile and credibility.....Mansfield Men's Shed welcomed the Governor to their shed when they heard he was visiting their area. It was a wonderful opportunity to publicise the Mansfield's Shed activities and community involvement. The Governor's interest and involvement in the VMSA has been a boost to our enthusiasm and assisted us to spread the word.

The activities of Men's Sheds and the VMSA have also been noticed by others such as Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard and we believe Men's Sheds and their benefit to men and the community are discussed at all levels of Government.

Where to in the future?

With our first year of operations behind us, we must now look to the future. There will be many challenges ahead of us, but I believe we are in a very strong position to be able to meet those challenges and continue to grow. We look forward to the next round of Government funding to see more new Sheds set up in Victoria, but we must also continue to lobby for recurrent funding that will help both new and existing Sheds to prosper into the future. As you all know from experience, putting up a building for a Men's Shed is the easy part. Keeping it all together and keeping the doors open is the real challenge.

We have the opportunity here to create something really special. Let us not be concerned with just dollars and numbers, instead we should be concerned about each other. I see the VMSA as being an extension of what a Men's Shed is all about. In it's most simple form, a Men's Shed is a place where blokes can come together and support each other. These meetings of the VMSA can be a place where Men's Sheds from all parts of Victoria can come together and support each other. It was very pleasing at our last meeting at Mansfield to see Sheds from Northern Victoria come along for the first time. We would hope that as we continue to hold these meetings in different parts of the State, that all sheds in Victoria both metropolitan and rural, would have the chance to attend at least one meeting per year

(Continued on Page 4)

Victorian Mens Shed Association Presidents Report Continued

I would like to take this opportunity to thank a number of people who have been of great assistance. Firstly to the Committee. I have often heard it said that if the people running something are passionate about it, then it can only succeed. It is clear that we do have a very passionate group on the Committee, so I am confident that VMSA does have a very bright future ahead of it. A big thank you to all of you.

GARY GREEN. If there is one person that has done more than anyone else for the Men's Shed movement in Australia then it has to be Gary. His vision for the first National Conference in Lakes Entrance in 2005 is what has unified the Men's sheds all over the country and has led to the formation of AMSA, VMSA and numerous other Shed groups. Well done Mate!!!

Lyn Kinder. Lyn has been instrumental in the setting up of VMSA. She took the initiative and called the first meeting of Victorian Men's Sheds which has led us to where we are today. A big thank you for all your help, your friendship and your inspiration.

Ted Donnelly. Most of you will know Ted from the great job he did as one of the organisers of the 2nd National Conference held in Sydney last year. Ted has also been a great help to us here in Victoria. He has been a fountain of advice and information for us. Much appreciated.

A big thanks also goes to Barry Golding and Rick Hayes for the fantastic research work they have been doing on the Men's Shed movement. They have also been a great support to us all.

I would also like to thank all the Men's Sheds who have hosted our meetings: Brimbank, Ballarat, Melton, Bendigo and Mansfield. We will continue to hold meetings at different locations so as to give all Victorian Sheds a chance to attend or host one of these meetings.

Lastly, but by no means least, a big thank you to all the men and women who are part of Men's Sheds everywhere. Without all your hard work and dedication, the Men's Sheds movement would not be what it is today. To paraphrase an old Navy saying, **"It's not the Shed, It's the men (and women) in it."** It has been a great pleasure getting to know you all this year.

Iain Beggs President - Victorian Men's Shed Association

The Paid Staff

"The Paid Staff" is what I usually get called when I walk into a Shed to which my reply is "Yeh but not very much". I have been writing this newsletter for some two years now from the early days when it started as the newsletter for the "Shed @ Windale" then grew to what we have today and I have never informed the readers of who I am. Now due to a lot of people asking that question and a bit of peer pressure the time has come to tell a brief story.

I am employed by Centacare Newcastle as the Project Coordinator for the Shed @ Windale. This position description has changed somewhat over the past two and a bit years and now I am still doing that task along with coordinating the Hunter Valley Shed Cluster and filling the temporary executive role of our Australian Men's Shed Association.

Professionally I have several incarnations. Prior to this position I was the General Manager of a large Association, which is why I could see so much opportunity for AMSA. My experience is in administration, marketing with some tertiary studies to add to the mix. However, my working life began with 17 years as a baker in a medium sized family business, so my background is quite diverse.

Personally I am 41, married with two kids, (twins). Characteristically I am a quiet person who always prefers to work in the background striving for results but never one to seek the centre stage. For the first time I have also included a mug shot taken in my shed at home where I tend to spend more time than in than the house, so you now know who you are speaking to on the phone.

When I do have a bit of spare time it is generally spent renovating the home (over 4 years now). To maintain domestic bliss I have at least removed the 700 m of hardwood timber from the lounge room.

For the next 12 months my commitment is to the development of our Association, so if you have any enquiries, suggestions or are in need of advice give me a call. I am the one you will generally get when you dial 1300 550 009 or send me an email david.helmerts@mn.catholic.org.au



REGIONAL GROUP REPORTS

2008 Victorian Men's Shed Association (VMSA) - Annual General meeting

The AGM is being held at the Brimbank Men's Shed on Friday 17 October where a new Committee will be elected. In addition the new Patron of the VMSA, Prof David De Krester, will be addressing what promises to be a full representative meeting of the Victorian Sheds.

2008 Tasmanian Shed Get Together

A meeting is planned at Pete's Community Men's Shed, Hobart on Saturday, 11th. October, 2008, for all interested Tasmanian Sheds. Items to discuss are:-

- The state of Men's Sheds in Tasmania
- Funding for Sheds – Government and Non-Government
- The formation of a Tasmanian Branch of AMSA
- The 2009 Conference
- Any other matters individual Sheds want to raise

Independent Men's Shed Alliance - (Western NSW)

This report was compiled from extracts from our meeting and other events.

A meeting was held at Boorowa on 2 August 08 with 42 delegates present representing **Blayney-Boorowa- Canowindra-Coolamon-Coonamble-Cootamundra-Cowra-Grenfell-Gundagi-Harden-Junee-Parkes and Temora**. Reports were taken from all sheds with some interesting results. One common thread was the Community involvement by ALL sheds in various ways – each tailored to suit their own area. The variety seems endless and the results are beneficial to all especially the shed members themselves.

Several sheds are moving / setting up new sheds – all are different and all are keen and enthused. New sheds are opening in almost every town now and the remaining towns would seem to be “gaining momentum” and recognising the “need for and the way ahead” to establish their own shed. To this end the PARKES shed have set a new standard and therefore a new challenge to EVERY shed in Australia. They have mentored a new shed in a smaller area that may not have the resources to set up their own but they still have the need. Now if you think about it most sheds in Australia have another area near them – think of the benefits to those other men out there – it could be you or me! It takes Positive thinking and planning to set up a new shed as we know – the same attributes needed for this extension of our network. Let me know your thoughts if you like ---- grenfelmensshed@westnet.com.au

If you want to see the biggest – most impressive shed around then check out the new JUNEE shed just opened on the 26th July – had most shedders present drooling!!

The new Lake Cargelligo Shed opening is on the 30th September – the Grenfell and Parkes sheds will be attending, as will others from the Western area. Of interest it represents about a 3 hour drive from Grenfell – each way – and we will be taking a bus full for a loong day out. Look for the photos on our web site <http://grenfelmensshed.blogspot.com/> a few days later. Every shed in our alliance report many contacts from the “next town” and beyond – we have had reports as far as almost every NSW border – it makes Len Wallace's dream of their being “one in every town” seem almost here. Well done and look after one another.

Compiled by Ray Cawthorne - President – Grenfell Mens Shed

PANDORA & THE AMSA WEBSITE

Most people link Pandora to a box, but to the National Library of Australia it means *"Preserving and Accessing Networked Documentary Resources of Australia"*.

The Pandora archive collects and provides long term access to selected online publications and websites that have a significant relevance to Australia.

They have selected the AMSA website to be a subject worthy of archiving and the result can be viewed at <http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-87281>.

Currently we are designing a new website and, whilst retaining the parts of the old one that have proved useful, we are looking for suggestions to produce the site that you want to use. Ideas to AMSA.

Ted Donnelly

Mens Health Feature :- Carolyn Salmon

A Free Men's Shed Information Kit from **beyondblue**

GETTING men to take care of their mental and physical health can be tough.

After all, a lot of men have grown up being taught not to show weakness, not to talk about the emotional stuff or see a doctor on a regular basis. But if you broke your leg or had diabetes, would you be expected to just "get over it?" Of course you wouldn't.

Depression can be as serious and debilitating as a physical health problem like a broken leg or diabetes and can also be treated effectively. One in six men will experience depression during their life time. While we all feel sad or low from time to time and grieve when we are experiencing loss, some people experience these feelings intensely, for long periods of time and often without an apparent reason.

People with depression often find it hard to function every day, don't want to do the things they usually like doing, often withdraw from family and friends, and stop going out.

It is important that you see a doctor if you think you have depression because it will probably get worse if it's left untreated, just like a any other illness..

Without diagnosis and treatment, sometimes the illness associated with depression can be a risk factor for binge drinking, drug taking or suicide. Men respond to depression differently from women and they often think something is *physically* wrong with them. They might lose weight suddenly or feel angry for no reason. This is why depression can be hard to identify.

To provide men with up to date information about their mental health and where to get help, **beyondblue: the national depression initiative** has put together information packs for Men's Sheds.

The **beyondblue** Shed Kit includes:

- information about the signs and symptoms of depression, how to find out if you have it, how to get help for you or one of your mates
- a DVD with country men talking about their experiences and what worked for them
- a wallet card with useful help line numbers and websites

a self-help book *Taking Care of Yourself and Your Family* by John Ashfield

Taking the time to have a look at this free information from **beyondblue might just be the best thing you could do for yourself, a mate or your family.**

RECOGNIZING A STROKE - 3 Simple steps

Neurologist reckon that if they can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours they have a good chance of totally reversing the effects of a stroke. The problem is getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed and getting to the patient within 3 hours which is tough.

Lack of awareness can spell disaster. The stroke victim may suffer brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

- 1. Ask the individual to SMILE.**
- 2. Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.**
- 3. Ask the person to SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE (i.e... *It is sunny out today*)**

If he / she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 000 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher. Widespread use of this test could result in prompt diagnosis and treatment of the stroke and prevent brain damage.

FEATURE SHED - NAMBUCCA MEN'S SHED

The Shed has been a buzz with many projects and jobs being undertaken since the last newsletter. At the moment 'Pipi', Keith and the boy's are working on a wooden canoe to be donated to Camp Quality as a raffle prize. Recently the fellow's made some display stands for the Nambucca Uniting Church's new Op-Shop in the Mall as well as repairing and making some tables for Nambucca CWA. In a partnership with Council and a local conservation group the Men's Shed manufactured a number of large wire bird traps to be used to reduce the exploding population of Indian Myna birds that are threatening local native bird habitats. Thanks to Bob & Gino who, working to a set of plans council provided, soon became very efficient at twisting & bending wire to produce the 14 trap's. .



Local Church group supporting 'the Shed'.

The Blokes at 'the Shed' and myself would like to thank the Nambucca Baptist Church who's members have been running a stall at the Nambucca Lions Community markets each month, with the proceeds, 'some \$1,300 odd dollars to date', going to assist the Men's Shed with the purchase and maintenance of equipment. This has given some of the blokes at 'the Shed' incentive to make items such as letterboxes, birdfeeders and chopping boards to be sold at the markets and we are always on the lookout for good ideas for saleable items, so if you have any (ideas that is) let us know.

Farewell to old friends.

One of our long term regulars at 'the Shed', Rob Makaway has returned to fulltime employment with Main Star manufacturing at Macksville. Rob has dropped in to visit the old crowd at 'the Shed' on a few occasions and is very happy in his new job. The Blokes at the Shed miss the great assistance and friendship Rob brought to 'the Shed' and they have asked that I pass on their thanks and wish him all the best in the future. Rob had been a volunteer at 'the Shed' for the past four years and was a representative on the OH & S Committee as well a member of the Men's Shed bowls team.

Mobile Phone Recycling.

The Blokes at 'the Shed' have made two mobile phone recycle bins; one is at our office in Macksville the other at the Uniting Church Op-Shop in Nambucca Heads. Members of the public are being asked to drop off their old unwanted mobile phones in one of our recycle bins and ECO-PHONE will donate \$2.50 for each hand set collected to the Men's Shed. The Blokes at 'the Shed' saw this as a good fundraising idea for the Shed, it helps people find a good use for those old phones as well as a way of keeping mobiles out of landfills etc.

Visit to the Wauchope Men's Shed.

Fifteen of the Blokes from Nambucca Shed ventured South to Timber Town on our last "Road Trip" to pay a visit to the recently opened Men's Shed in Wauchope. The idea of the visit was to allow the sharing of ideas and offer support to the fellows just starting out in with the shed at Wauchope. While there the guy's paid a visit to the Hastings Woodworkers Group. This proved to be all inspiring with many of the Blokes bringing back ideas for projects after seeing the marvellous wood craft on display. The standard of workmanship on items being produced by these guy's at Timber Town is second to none and for the Blokes from Nambucca to have the opportunity to spend time talking and picking up tips was worth the travel south. All enjoyed lunch at the Wauchope RSL before returning home eager to start new projects.

Yoga.

The Friday men's yoga group is up and running again after a short break over the school holidays. Samadhi, who has been instructing the group for over twelve months, welcomes newcomers to these free classes which are held every Friday between 10.00 & 11.30 a.m. at the Men's Shed. Classes are run to the individuals' level of fitness with special attention paid to breathing exercises. Contact Stuart at the Shed for more information on (02)6568 5090.

Stu Holmes - Project Officer.

If you would like to have your Shed featured contact AMSA on amsa@tpg.com.au

AMSA Membership Application

The Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) was formalised in 2007 at the National Men's Shed Conference held at Manly with a view to establishing a bonding support base for all independent Men's Sheds throughout Australia.

To be considered seriously we need to show that there is a large base of registered members who have elected to join the Association. In the last newsletter we asked all who agreed in principle to the AMSA concept to complete an application form to join the Australian Men's Shed Association at no cost.

There was a good response but there are still Sheds who have not replied and we would like to hear from them.

Membership is open to all Sheds, whether fully operational, starting up or still in the planning/researching stages. "Independent Supporters" (retired shedders) and "Associates" (from Universities, Gov. & Community agencies) are also eligible to register.

This action will enable the Association to gain an increased credibility and opportunity to act on your behalf.

Regional AMSA Contacts

A number of enquiries that are sent to AMSA require local knowledge and therefore, to improve the flow of information, some members have agreed to act as regional contacts. Their details are given below and they will help with local queries or re-direct the request if necessary.

As the number of Regional groups and Clusters grow this list will be enlarged.

All other enquiries to AMSA by Phone on 1300 550 009 or Email amsa@tpg.com.au

| <u>Region</u> | <u>Contact</u> | <u>Phone</u> | <u>E-mail</u> |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
| Mid North Coast NSW | Stuart Holmes | (02) 6568 5090 | stuart@nvcsc.org.au |
| West NSW | Ray Cawthorne | (02) 6343 1289 | grenfellmensshed@westnet.com.au |
| Hunter Valley | David Helmers | (02) 4979 1344 | david.helmerts@mn.catholic.org.au |
| Sydney Area | Ruth van Herk | (02) 9418 8459 | lanecovemenshed@nsr.unitingcare.org.au |
| Victoria | Gary Green | (03) 5154 6648 | gary.green@orh.com.au |
| Victoria | Ron Mitchell | (03) 5234 6163 | lynneron@gotalk.net.au |
| Tasmania | John Waters | (03) 6263 5142 | bridgewatershed@bigpond.com |
| West Australia | Bill Johnstone | (08) 9336 4408 | fremanshed@optusnet.com.au |
| Queensland | Scotia Monkivitch | (07) 3027 4490 | scotia.monkivitch@brisbane.qldgov.au |
| Northern Rivers | Bill Taylor | (02) 6622 6116 | mms@mor.com.au |
| Warrumbungle Shire | Procter Morris | (02) 6849 2180 | procterm@hyw.com.au |

Please send your comments, suggestions for future articles or requests for information etc. to AMSA .
Phone:- 1300 550 009 Email:- amsa@tpg.com.au

*The Australian Men's Shed Association
 Newsletter is produced by:-*

"The Shed" @ Windale



Centacare Newcastle

